

## Seattle Bicycle Advisory Board - Bikeability Tour: Linden Ave N

### From N 77<sup>th</sup> ST to N 145<sup>th</sup> ST

Tour date: May 16, 2010

(Document revised June 18, 2010 after meeting with SDOT project manager Connie Zimmerman and project engineer Dave Vijarro, and on July 8, 2010 after receiving corrections from Connie Zimmerman.)

**SBAB Board Members Present:** Allegra Calder, Kelsey Jones-Casey, Neal Komedal, Blake Trask, Ann Boyd

### Purpose

SDOT is currently in the design phase of a complete street improvement project on Linden Ave N between N 128<sup>th</sup> ST and N 145<sup>th</sup> ST. This section of Linden Ave N is a gap in the Interurban trail system from Downtown Seattle to Shoreline, in that it has sharrows as existing bicycle facilities. SDOT is proposing bike lanes on both sides of the road to fill this gap, along with new sidewalks and reconfigured on-street parking. Members of the Bicycle Advisory Board rode the section to get a ground level view of the area and make recommendations to SDOT about the bicycle facilities.

### Existing Conditions

The Interurban Trail is a bikeway linking downtown Seattle to Shoreline. It is a mixture of bike paths, bicycle boulevards, multi-use paved trails, and is marked throughout by wayfinding signs.



The section of Linden Ave N between N 128<sup>th</sup> ST and N 145<sup>th</sup> ST represents a physical and experiential gap in the trail system. South and north of the project area, the Interurban is a paved multi-use trail that provides physical separation from traffic for bicyclists.



*Entrance to Interurban multi-use trail at N 128<sup>th</sup> ST*



*Entrance to Interurban multi-use trail at N 145<sup>th</sup> ST*

The roadway in most of the project area is underdeveloped, without curbs or sidewalks and a mixture of undefined, parallel and diagonal parking. The right-of-way appears generally large and bordered by City-owned land in some places. Traffic and transit use on this roadway is low. State Route 99 to the East carries most of the north-south volume.

### Opinion

Traveling from a multi-use trail to surface streets with sharrows as bicycle facilities creates an unwelcome and unsafe experience. Novice cyclists and young cyclists are not likely to ride the “gap” to connect to the multi-use trail on the other side, thus limiting their range of travel in this important north-south recreation and commuter corridor.

The significant width of the right-of-way on Linden Ave N, though constrained in parts by adjacent grades, as well as the lack of existing built infrastructure such as sidewalks and curbs, presents an

excellent opportunity to build adequate and safe facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists. The low traffic and transit counts on this section combined with increased residential density in the area further add to this opportunity.

#### Recommendation

SBAB strongly recommends SDOT consider installing a cycle track on Linden Ave N. A cycle track could take the form of a two-way separated bikeway on one side of the street, located between parking and the sidewalk. A 2-foot buffer, either raised or painted, would separate the parking from the cycle track. Cycle tracks are more like a multi-use trail than an on-street bike lane and will be perceived by trail users as a connection rather than a gap. Novice users and families will be more likely to extend their trips on a cycle track than on an on-street bicycle lane. Transit islands and crossing islands can be built adjacent to the cycle track which will shorten pedestrian crossing distances and smooth bus travel. Crossing islands also make pedestrians more visible to traffic, as they put pedestrians in front of parked cars rather than behind them.

Due to the nature of Linden Ave N between N 128<sup>th</sup> ST and N 145<sup>th</sup> ST, SBAB considers this an ideal location to implement one of Seattle's first cycle tracks. Cycle tracks are a bicycle facility gaining popularity across the globe, due to the safety they create by separating bikes and cars. Others being considered in Seattle are on Broadway and Dexter Ave N. On Linden Ave N, a two-way cycle track is unique in its potential to connect seamlessly to the multi-modal trail connections on either end. The low traffic volumes should make this an excellent test site as there is unlikely to be significant opposition from heavy roadway users as they are well accommodated on State Route 99. The Bicycle Advisory Board recommends that SDOT reconsider its plans to install bike lanes and investigate cycle tracks.